Mr. Henry Hurt
Roving Editor
Readers Digest
Chatham, Va. 24531

4/16/82

Dear Henry,

Thanks for your letters of the 13th and 14th and the proofs of the two articles. My wife gets the Digest and I read the Nosenko piece when it appeared.

That we disagree on Nosenko with regard to what he is said to have said about Oswald I knew when I said I'd help you all I can. As I told you, I'm in a public role, whether I prefer it or not, and try to be as conscientious in it as one can be. I do not try to influence the opinions of others unless they want me to. Unlike the Chinese, who abandoned the fine principle years ago, I believe all the flowers should bloom. And that what some regard as weeds may also be beautiful. Some years ago, when the Attorney General announced a new reinvestigation of the King assassination and its investigation, I offered to help and would have if the offer had been accepted. I do not hide the fact that I did not believe any help was wanted or that anything outside the initial official preconception would be considered under any circumstances. If my offer had been accepted it would have cost me a book, but I'd have done as I offered. As of now I plan to give the Attorney General a copy of that book before publication.

Thanks for the offer to look for what may still be at the Digest when you are up there again. Remember, my Nosenko interest is limited to the JFK assassination, what he said about Oswald in particular.

I can't get to Boston so searching whatever Epstein has deposited is beyond me now. If you hear more about where it is, perhaps I might get someone up there to do the searching for me.

I also was quite surprised to find that a KGB defector had searched me out, first by phone and then in person. If it was not Golitsyn, when it was probably the one who did the Penkowsky book and has gone public in other ways. I've forgotten his name. Whoever he is, he was more venomous about Nosenko than I've ever heard anyone be about anyone else.

While I doubt both Barron and Nosenko will agree to a meeting, thanks for the suggestion. I'll try it.

Jim Lesar will probably phone today or tomorrow. I'll ask him to send you a copy of the spectro appeals ~~brief~~ brief. As I believe I said, you are welcome to copies of anything in that voluminous file. Or your researcher, if you have one, can have access here or I'm sure at Jim's office, meaning with Bud's machine if there is not much copying or where they have larger jobs done commercially.

May I suggest a reformulation in what you said of the testing and the information I seek? Not so much that these result "would" show the invalidity of the Commission's conclusions, which are merely a rehash of the FBI's, as can show this. I'm also pretty certain that all necessary tests were not made because they could have jeopardized the instant preconception. The actuality is pretty Byzantine. With regard to the HSCA and the opinion offered to you, HSCA didn't even attempt to validate the specimens it tested and its expert, Dr. Vincent Guinn, who was a close friend of the FBI agent who did the initial testing, told reporters after he testified that none of the samples he was given matched the official descriptions of the original samples. I go into this in some detail in one of the affbidavits I filed after the previous remand.

If you want to spend time on HSCA when we get together, I'll take all the time you want and will document just about anything I will say. If I can encapsulate it, they began with the unhidden intent to support the official accounts in both crimes and the determination to make only the most inconsequential criticisms of the Commission and FBI.

The format was a putdown of the critics, often with unrepresentative selections. In this there is only one with whom they would not tangle, me. I followed their work closely and in almost all cases was the source of published criticisms in the N.Y. Times and Wx Post. Where the committee went into what I had published, meaning the same areas but in all instances without mention of my books, they did not lay a finger on my work.

By all means get the beliefs of former Commission people on their investigation. I doubt that any will speak to you jointly with me, but I'm willing with any one of them. If they claim they made what can be called a real investigation, I suggest two questions ignored by the FBI in the spectro case. The Commission knew that the so-called missed shot had made a nick in the curbstone but the curbstone dug up and "tested" by the FBI had no nick and was visibly smoother and darker at that point. They ignored this, as the FBI has ignored it in this litigation. (The FBI has yet to dispute any of my sworn allegations. It can't.) How could they not investigate that? They didn't even ask the FBI about it. And the medical people who saw JFK before they removed his clothes said that the shot in the neck was above his collar. The testing disclosed no traces of metal on that part of the shirt or the tie. The holes in the shirt do not coincide, as they must if of ballistic origin. And the doctor and the nurses testified that they cut JFK clothes off. So how could the Commission not have any investigation of this and conclude that a bullet cause those holes and the nick in the tie which in any even does not coincide with either of the slits in the shirt? FYI, the nick and the slits in the collar band were made by the scalpel with which the nurses cut the tie off, the usual emergency practise. With this and with much else I can provide you with pictures. Before and after of the curbstone, too. HSCA also, by the way, ignored these things. They never even spoke to Jim Tague, who was slightly wounded by the missed shot.

Apropos of the Shadrin frustration and as a general principle in this work may I suggest Occam thinking, seek the simplest solutions.

With regard to the Commission people, it is not necessary to regard them all as mendacious. Remember, they are all formed by the adversary principle of law. For all its defects I do not know of a better system. However, it provides a sort of immunity cloak for its practitioners. They live in the belief that anything they can get away with as adversaries is right and proper, for there is a judge to preside and determine. So, on the Commission, they behaved as prosecutors, ignoring the fact that there was no judge to keep them honest.

With regard to the books on the subject, I urge that you question everything any of us has written because much is faulty and too much is really dishonest. In just about every case I can provide you with factual illustrations. Epstein and Lifton in particular of the recent books, those that got most attention. Lifton is plugging and the publisher is advertising the paperback.

Add to Occam, Through the lookingglass and The Purloined Letter.

Good luck and best wishes,

Harold Weisberg

Dear Mr. Hurt,

4/7/82

While Epstein is far from my only gripe about the Digest, it makes no difference and I'll help you in any way I can. Mine has become a public function. I help those with whom I disagree -with few exceptions - whenever I can.

Because I don't know what you believe, who knows, we may not disagree.

If Bud didn't tell you, the major problem with use of my files is their great volume. The FBI's estimate of its records is over a third of a million pages. And I have other records.

However, once I was able to get a decent copier I began a subject file of duplicates.

I've kept all copies of official records exactly as I've received them because all are going to a university archive.

There is an ~~index~~ index of the Dallas main files for about two years. I have it. It can be used to locate most disclosed records - all of Dallas's and some of FBIHQ's. (First two years.)

Before you get too far into your project, if it entails any theorizing I strongly encourage you to try it out on me. If I can support it, I will. If I can undermine it, I think you'd want to know how and with what.

I don't intend to coal Newcastle, but if you are not aware of it, believe me, the major flaw of the official investigations is that they were not and were not intended to be investigations of the crime itself.

You need not fear that I'll steal anything from you. Not only wouldn't I - but my next book will be on the King assassination, and I'm not yet ready to begin it.

After that I do plan one on Oswald.

Until the weather moderates I spend mornings until about 11 walking in a nearby mall. Doctor's orders. However, I can skip it or return earlier.

Otherwise, I'm home most of the time.

Lifton is working on a new book. I know nothing else about it. Nothing in the book he is still promoting is original with him except the totally untenable theory. No matter what he has mistered in support of it. It is impossible. He knows of total disaproofs he just ignored.

Good luck and best wishes,